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ABSTRACT

This document presents curriculum guidelines intended for use as a recommended curriculum for children attending early childhood programs in Oklahoma. The introductory section describes critical characteristics of quality early childhood programs, noting that early childhood programs should be appropriate for the age, developmental level, and special needs of each child and that the learning environment should foster all areas of development and provide the challenge to learn for all children. The remainder of the document presents standards in the following areas: (1) approaches to learning; (2) creative skills; (3) language arts; (4) mathematics; (5) health, safety, and physical development; (6) science; (7) social and personal skills; and (8) social studies. Indicators of progress for each standard are delineated. A glossary of relevant terms completes the document. (KB)

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Oklahoma State Department of Education

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Overview

Early childhood programs should be appropriate for the age, developmental level, and special needs of each child. The environment should be modified and adapted to promote the participation, engagement, and learning of **all** children. Young children are integrally connected to their families and it is important to establish positive relationships with them as a whole that is based on mutual trust and respect. Teaching is based on the knowledge of content and how young children develop and learn. The learning environment fosters all areas of development: **intellectual, language, physical and social/emotional;** and provides the challenge for children to learn according to their individual growth patterns.

Early childhood programs should:

- Provide curriculum that builds upon what children already know and are able to do to enable them to connect new concepts and skills.
- Provide units or themes of interest that integrate and teach across all areas of the core curriculum (e.g., foreign languages, language arts including reading, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts).
- Provide a literacy-rich environment arranged in all learning centers or learning areas (e.g., art center, science center, reading center, dramatic play center, block center). Each center will have a variety of activities for the children. This arrangement allows for a wide range of developmental interests and abilities within the same classroom.
- Provide exposure to a wide variety of information and literacy experiences and the use of technology through daily activities in the classroom and/or media center.
- Provide a safe environment designed for the developmental needs of the age group served and implemented with attention to the requirements and differences of the individual children.
- Provide a climate that is active; one in which children interact with each other and materials while engaging in cooperative hands-on learning with day-to-day life experiences.
- Provide a balance of classroom activities that are teacher-directed and child-initiated. These activities may be active or quiet, performed individually or in large and small groups.
- Provide an environment that is sensitive to cultural, language, and learning differences among all children served.
- Provide an on-going process of collecting information from multiple sources about a child's needs, which may include observation, portfolios, screenings, etc., to determine an individual's strengths and weaknesses in order to plan his/her educational services.

These Early Childhood Curriculum Guidelines are intended to be a recommended curriculum for children attending early childhood programs in Oklahoma. Teachers trained in early childhood curriculum theories will provide an enriched curriculum including the following skills and many others.

NOTE:

Book icons 🕮 identify Information Literacy skills. Students are best served when these are taught in collaboration and cooperation between the classroom teacher and a school/community library media specialist.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

There are basic principles or approaches to learning present for all children. Each child has his/her own unique approach to learning that should be fostered and encouraged as they grow and develop.

Standard 1: The child demonstrates positive attitudes, habits, and learning styles.

1. Demonstrates an eagerness and interest in learning.
2. Develops and expands listening skills.
3. Demonstrates self-direction and independence.
4. Demonstrates increasing ability to set goals and develop and follow through on plans.
5. Manages transition between activities effectively.
6. Understands, accepts, and follows rules and routines.
7. Develops increasing ability to find more than one solution to a question, task or problem.
8. Recognizes and solves problems through active exploration, including trial and error, and interactions and discussions with peers and adults.

CREATIVE SKILLS

Creative skills are developed by engaging children in activities with play dough, sand, water, dramatic play, blocks, creative stories, art, music, movement, and a variety of other materials.

Standard 1: The child participates in activities that foster individual creativity.

1. Demonstrates with increasing interest and enjoyment in a variety of creative activities, including listening, singing, finger play, games and performances.
2. Thinks of new uses for familiar materials.
3. Engages in spontaneous and imaginative play using a variety of materials to dramatize stories and experiences.
4. Works creatively using a variety of self-expressive materials and tools to creatively express ideas.

5. Moves freely in response to music and change of tempo.

6. Expresses thoughts and feelings through creative movement.

7. Experiments with a variety of musical instruments.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Young children begin to develop language arts skills through the context of shared reading with quality children's literature, shared writing, language experience, reading and writing centers.

For English Language Learners (ELL), educators should gather information and appropriate procedures should be followed to determine which language should be used to understand the impact of second language acquisition on the child's development and performance in the early childhood setting. Teachers need to assist ELL by building upon what children may already know in their native language. Emphasis should be placed on commonalities that exist between English and the native language. Extra time should be allowed for ELL to process information and formulate thoughts. It is important to use concrete objects and pictures to teach ELL children.

Oral Language

Standard 1: Listening - The child will listen for information and for pleasure.

1. Listens with interest to stories read aloud.

2. Understands and follows oral direction.

Standard 2: Speaking - The child will express ideas or opinions in group or individual settings.

1. Uses language for a variety of purposes (e.g., expressing needs and interests).

2. Recalls and repeats simple poems, rhymes, and songs.

3. Uses sentences of increasing length (three or more words) and grammatical complexity in everyday speech.

4. Shares simple personal narrative.

5. Participates actively in conversations.

Literacy

Standard 3: Print Awareness - The child will understand the characteristics of written language.

1. Demonstrates increasing awareness of concepts of print.

2. Identifies the front cover and back cover of a book. 🕮
3. Follows book from left to right and from top to bottom on the printed page. 🕮
4. Shows increasing awareness of print in classroom, home and community settings.
5. Begins to recognize the relationship or connection between spoken and written words by following the print as it is read aloud.
6. Understands that print carries a message by recognizing labels, signs, and other print forms in the environment.
7. Develops growing understanding of the different functions of forms of print (e.g., signs, letters, newspapers, lists, messages, and menus).
8. Begins to understand some basic print conventions (e.g., the concept that letters are grouped to form words and that words are separated by spaces).
9. Role plays reading.

Standard 4: Phonological Awareness - The child will demonstrate the ability to work with rhymes, words, syllables, and onsets and rimes.

1. Begins to hear, identify, and make oral rhymes (e.g., "The pig has a wig").
2. Shows increasing ability to hear, identify, and work with syllables in spoken words (e.g., "I can clap the parts in my name: An-drew").

Standard 5: Phonemic Awareness - The child will demonstrate the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words.

1. Shows increasing ability to discriminate, identify and work with individual phonemes in spoken words (e.g., "The first sound in sun is /s/").
2. Recognizes which words in a set of words begin with the same sound (e.g., "Bell, bike, and boy all have /b/ at the beginning").

Standard 6: Phonics (Letter Knowledge and Early Word Recognition) - The child will demonstrate the ability to apply sound-symbol relationships.

1. Recognizes own name in print.
2. Demonstrates awareness or knowledge of letters of the English language, especially letters from own name.
3. Begins to recognize the sound association for some letters.
4. Knows that letters of the alphabet are a special category of visual graphics that can be individually named.

Standard 7: Vocabulary - The child will develop and expand knowledge of words and word meanings to increase vocabulary.

1. Shows a steady increase in listening and speaking vocabulary.
2. Understands and follows oral directions (e.g., use of position words: under, above, through).
3. Links new learning experiences and vocabulary to what is already known about a topic.

Standard 8: Comprehension - The child will associate meaning and understanding with reading.

1. Begin to use prereading skills and strategies (e.g., connecting prior knowledge to text, making predictions about text and using picture clues).
2. Demonstrates progress in abilities to retell and dictate stories from books and experiences.
3. Remembers and articulates some sequences of events.
4. Connects information and events to real-life experiences when being read a story.
5. Demonstrates understanding of literal meaning of story being told through questions and comments.
6. Tells what is happening in a picture.

Writing

Standard 9: Writing Process - The child will use the "writing process" to express thoughts and feelings.

1. Develops understanding that writing is a way of communicating for a variety of purposes.
2. Progresses from using scribbles, shapes, or pictures to represent ideas to using letter-like symbols, or writing familiar words such as their own name.
3. Participates in writing opportunities.
4. Begins to remember and repeat stories and experiences through drawing and dictation.

MATHEMATICS

Young children begin to develop mathematical understanding through experiences with a wide variety of real objects provided in learning centers and practical situations (e.g., blocks, pegs, buttons, cooking).

Standard 1: Patterns - The child will sort and classify objects and analyze simple patterns.

1. Sorts and groups objects into a set and explains verbally what the objects have in common (e.g., color, size, shape).

2. Recognizes patterns, can repeat them, and explain them verbally (red,black, red,black, red,black).

Standard 2: Number Sense – The child will understand the relationship between numbers and quantities.

1. Begins to associate number concepts, vocabulary, quantities, and written numerals in meaningful ways.
2. Begins to make use of one-to-one correspondence in counting objects and matching groups of objects.
3. Develops increasing ability to count in sequence to ten.
4. Counts objects in a set one-by-one from one through five.
5. Identifies and creates sets of objects one through five.
6. Identifies numerals one through five.
7. Recognizes the numerical value of sets of objects through five.

Standard 3: Geometry and Spatial Sense – The child will identify common geometric shapes and explore the relationship of objects in the environment.

1. Begins to recognize, describe, compare, and name common shapes (e.g., circle, square, rectangle).
2. Builds an increasing understanding of directionality, order and position of objects, and words e.g., on, under, above).

Standard 4: Measurement – The child will explore the concepts of nonstandard and standard measurement.

1. Measures objects using nonstandard units of measurement (e.g., pencil, paper clip, block).
2. Compares objects according to observable attributes (e.g., long, longer, longest; short, shorter, shortest; big, bigger, biggest; small, smaller, smallest; small, medium, large).
3. Compares and orders objects in graduated order (e.g., shortest to tallest, thinnest to thickest).
4. Develops an awareness of simple time concepts within his/her daily life (e.g., yesterday, today, tomorrow; morning, afternoon, night).

Standard 5: Data Analysis – The child will collect and analyze data in a group setting.

1. Begins to use numbers and counting as a means for solving problems and measuring quantity.

2. Develops growing abilities to collect, describe, and record information through a variety of means, including discussion, drawings, maps, charts, and graphs.

3. Describes similarities and differences between objects.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Young children need the opportunity to develop large and small motor skills through indoor and outdoor activities and games for the benefit of personal fitness and well being.

Large Motor Skill Development

Standard 1: The child will participate in activities that involve large motor skills.

1. Demonstrates basic locomotor movements (e.g., galloping, hopping, jumping, running, sliding, riding tricycles, pulling wagons, pushing wheelbarrows).

2. Demonstrates body and space awareness to move and stop with control over speed and direction.

3. Demonstrates nonlocomotor movements (e.g., bending, pulling, pushing, stretching, swaying, swinging, turning, twisting).

4. Demonstrates increasing abilities to coordinate movements in throwing, catching, kicking, bouncing balls, and using the slide and swing.

5. Coordinates large arm movements (e.g., easel painting, woodworking, climbing, throwing, playing rhythm band instruments, writing on chalkboard, playing with blocks, catching, and tossing).

6. Develops coordination and balance through a variety of activities.

Small Motor Skill Development

Standard 2: The child will participate in activities that involve small motor skills.

1. Demonstrates increased control of hand and eye coordination (e.g., using pegs, beads, pattern blocks, crayons, pencils, paint brushes, finger-paint, scissors, glue, and a variety of puzzles).

2. Demonstrates increasing control of small muscles in hands (e.g., using tongs or eyedropper, stringing beads).

Health Enhancing Activity Development

Standard 3: The child will participate in health-enhancing activities for the development of lifetime health and fitness.

1. Progresses in physical growth, strength, stamina, and flexibility.

2. Understands that healthy bodies require rest, exercise, and good nutrition.

3. Shows growing independence in following routine healthy behaviors (e.g., hygiene, nutrition and personal care when eating, dressing, washing hands, brushing teeth, and toileting).

4. Builds awareness and ability to follow basic health and safety rules.

SCIENCE

Science knowledge is developed through experiences with real animals, plants and objects in the classroom and the environment.

Science Processes and Inquiry

Standard 1: The child will investigate and experiment with objects to discover information.

1. Develops increasing abilities to classify, compare, and contrast objects, events and experiences. 🕮

2. Selects and becomes familiar with simple scientific tools (e.g., magnifying glass, magnet).

3. Participates in simple experiments to discover information (e.g., bottles of water or homemade telephone to learn about vibration and sound, simple scale to determine heavy and light).

4. Asks questions, makes predictions, and communicates observations orally and/or in drawings. 🕮

5. Explores cause and effect.

Physical

Standard 2: The child will investigate and describe objects that can be sorted in terms of physical properties.

1. Develops an awareness of the sensory attributes of objects according to taste, smell, hearing, touch, and sight.

2. Develops an awareness of the properties of some objects (e.g., float-sink, heavy-light, rough-smooth, hard-soft, magnetic-nonmagnetic, solid-liquid, wet-dry).

3. Observes and describes how objects move (e.g., slide, turn, twirl, roll).

Life

Standard 3: The child will observe and investigate plants and animals.

1. Develops an awareness of what various plants and animals need for growth.

2. Demonstrates a beginning awareness of the changes that plants and animals go through during their life (e.g., seed/plant, egg/chicken).

3. Demonstrates an interest and respect for the plant and animal life around them.

Earth/Space

Standard 4: The child will investigate and observe the basic concepts of the Earth.

1. Develops an awareness of the properties of common earth materials (e.g., soil, rocks, water).
2. Develops an awareness of daily weather (e.g., sunny, cloudy, rainy, snowy, windy, hot, warm, cold).
3. Develops an awareness of the four seasons (e.g., temperature, weather, appropriate clothing, changing leaves).
4. Observes and participates in a variety of activities related to preserving the environment.

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL SKILLS

Social skills include interacting with others, work habits and self-help skills. To develop these skills, children need daily opportunities to develop the ability to negotiate issues that occur, to take turns, to lead and follow, and to be a friend. They also need to learn how to deal with their feelings in a socially acceptable manner.

Standard 1: The child will participate in activities to develop the skills necessary for working and interacting with others.

1. Plays, works and interacts easily with one or more children and/or adults.
2. Begins to develop relationships with others.
3. Recognizes the feelings of others and responds appropriately.
4. Develops confidence and stands up for own rights.
5. Shows respect for others and their property.
6. Recognizes and expresses own feelings and respond appropriately.
7. Develops increasing abilities to give and take in interactions; to take turns in games or using materials; and to interact without being overly submissive or directive.
8. Works independently and/or cooperatively to solve problems or resolve conflicts.
9. Seeks assistance from adult when appropriate.
10. Demonstrates emerging awareness and respect for culture, ethnicity, abilities and disabilities.

Standard 2: The child will develop the skills necessary for participating in a variety of settings.

1. States his/her full name, age, and name of parent or guardian.
2. Shows ability to adjust to new situations.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social studies provide an opportunity to develop an integrated curriculum using civics, geography, history and economics. Learning experiences may be provided through learning centers, resource people, projects, and field trips.

Civics

Standard 1: The child will exhibit traits of good citizenship.

1. Works and plays cooperatively in a variety of settings (e.g., in large and small groups, learning centers).
2. Recognizes the importance of his/her role as a member of the family, the class, and the community.
3. Listens to others while in large and small groups.
4. Shows respect for others and their property.
5. Develops an awareness of how people positively affect the environment.
6. Recognizes patriotic symbols and activities (e.g., American Flag).

Geography

Standard 2: The child will demonstrate knowledge of basic geographic concepts.

1. Locates and describes familiar places (e.g., classroom, home, school, fast food restaurant).
2. Begins to develop an understanding of his/her community (e.g., home, school, city).

Standard 3: The child will discuss how children in various communities and cultures are alike and different. 🕮

1. Explores how children have needs in common (e.g., food, clothing, shelter).
2. Explores how children are unique as to languages, food, clothing, transportation, and customs.
3. Explores how families and communities build "traditions."

Economics

Standard 4: The child will explore various careers.

1. Develops growing awareness of jobs and what is required to perform them.
2. Identifies various school and community personnel.
3. Develops an awareness of money being needed to purchase things.

GLOSSARY

centers - areas within the classroom arranged so that children are able to participate in a variety of activities relating to are, science, reading, dramatic play, blocks, etc.

consonants – the letters of the alphabet, not including vowels (b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z).

expressive language - the ability to communicate with words; it refers to what a child says, not how it is said.

grapheme – the smallest part of written language that represents a phoneme in the spelling of a word. A grapheme may be just one letter, such as b, d, f, p, s; or several letters such as, ch, sh, th, -ck, ea, -igh.

inquiry - processes of science (observe, sort, classify, describe, communicate).

language experience - an approach to the teaching of reading in which students read about their own experiences recorded in their own words. Experience stories are dictated by the student to a teacher who writes them down. Dictated accounts are reread in unison, in echo-fashion, and independently.

learning centers - areas within the classroom arranged so that children are able to participate in a variety of activities relating to art, science, reading, dramatic play, blocks, etc.

locomotor - movement from one place to another.

nonlocomotor - movement in place.

nonstandard measurement - a measurement determined by the use of nonstandard units (e.g., hands, paper clips, beans, cotton balls).

number sense - involves the understanding of numbers and their quantities.

one-to-one correspondence - pairing or matching objects in a one-to-one relationship.

onset – the initial consonant(s) sound of a syllable (e.g., the onset of bag is b-; of swim, sw-).

phonemes – the smallest part of spoken language that makes a difference in the meaning or words. (English has about 41 phonemes. Spanish has 29 phonemes.)

phonemic awareness - the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds – phonemes - in spoken words.

phonological awareness – a broad term that includes phonemic awareness. In addition to phonemes, phonological awareness activities can involve work with rhymes, words, syllables, and onsets and rimes.

phonics – the understanding that there is a predictable relationship between phonemes (the sounds of *spoken* language) and graphemes (the letters and spellings that represent those sounds in *written* language).

print awareness - the ability to understand how print works. This includes knowing that the print on the page represents the words that can be read aloud and distinguishing between various forms and purposes of print, from personal letters and signs to storybooks and essays.

prior knowledge - knowing that stems from previous experience.

receptive language - the ability to understand language.

rime - the part of a syllable that contains the vowel and all that follows it (e.g., the rime of bag is -ag; of swim, -im).

set - a group of objects.

shared reading - a term used to describe the process in which the teacher and the children read a book together. The book is read and reread many times. On the first several readings the teacher does most of the reading. As children become more familiar, they join in and "share" the reading.

shared writing - teacher and children work together to compose messages and stories; teacher supports process as a scribe.

spatial sense - involves building and manipulating mental representations of two- and three-dimensional objects and ideas.

standard measurement - a measure determined by the use of standard units (e.g., inches, feet, pounds, cups, pints, gallons).

syllable – a word part that contains a vowel or, in spoken language, a vowel sound (e-vent; news-pa-per; ver-y).

vowels - a, e, i, o, u and sometimes y and w.

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